

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2469  
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8248

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NI  
SUBJECT: YAR 'ADUA DEFENDS RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE

1. IN SPEECH BEFORE SENIOR OFFICERS TRAINING SEMINAR IN PLANO, JULY 19, BRIGADIER SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA, CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, DEFENDED TIMING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FMG PLANS FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. HIGHLIGHTS OF SPEECH INCLUDED STATEMENT THAT "IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT WE ABIDE BY IT (THE ANNOUNCED PROGRAM) AND ARE SEEN TO BE IMPLEMENTING IT. FOR, IT IS ONLY BY THIS ACT OF TRANSPARENT SINCERITY THAT WE CAN REDEEM THE CREDIBILITY AND HONOUR OF OUR PROFESSION."

2. YAR'ADUA ANSWERED CRITICISM OF FORTHCOMING INDIRECT ELECTION FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY BY SAYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS ARE ONLY PEOPLE TODAY WHO CAN CLAIM THEY HAVE "MANDATE OF THE PEOPLE THROUGH POPULAR AND FREE ELECTIONS" AND THAT WHEN ELECTED IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY WERE TO ELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

3. YAR'ADUA ALSO REJECTED IDEA OF NATIONAL REFERENDUM  
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BECAUSE OF COMPLEXITY OF NEW CONSTITUTION. DEFENDING BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES UNTIL AFTER CONSTITUTION IS APPROVED, HE SAID, "WE SURELY MUST HAVE AN AGREED CONSTITUTION WHICH... WILL DEFINE THE TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES WE ARE TO HAVE... TO DO OTHERWISE, IS TO INVITE THE VERY ANARCHIC CONDITIONS OF THE PAST WHERE WE HAD A PROLIFERATION OF TRIBALLY BASBF PARTIES..."

4. IN CLOSING, YAR'ADUA EMPHASIZED THAT MILITARY SHOULD LEAVE POLITICAL ARENA, SAYING, "...HAVING CHOSEN A MILITARY CAREER, THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON THE DEGREE OF OUR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AFTER 1979." HE THEN ADDED THAT MILITARY OFFICERS SHOULD EXERCISE RIGHT TO VOTE AND, BY IMPLICATION, AVOID OTHER INVOLVEMENT.

5. COMMENT. YAR'ADUA'S SPEECH WAS GIVEN WIDE MEDIA ATTENTION IN NIGERIA. HE CLEARLY INTENDED TO ASSURE BOTH CIVILIAN POPULACE AND MILITARY THAT FMG WOULD ADHERE TO ITS SCHEDULE FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. RECENT EVENTS IN GHANA HAVE UNDOUBTELY ATTRACTED ATTENTION OF CIVILIANS CRITICAL OF CONTINUED MILITARY GOVERNMENT. AT SAME TIME SOME WITHIN MILITARY, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, ARE CRITICAL OF PLANNED RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IN 1979. FINALLY, CRITICISM OF FMG'S APPROACH (CONSTITUTENT ASSEMBLY, INDIRECT ELECTION) IS ALSO HEARD FROM VARIOUS CIRCLES. ALTHOUGH YAR'ADUA'S SPEECH WILL NOT SILENCE CRITICS, IT CERTAINLY STANDS AS STRONG GOVERNMENT REASSURANCE OF ITS DETERMINATION TO RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AS PLANNED.  
WYMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, NI, (YAR\ADUA, SHEHU MUSA)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009